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B-1 JSOW/JASSM integration tests on track

by Sue Baker

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According to Maj. Bruce Snyder, flight tests to integrate two new weapons — the joint air-to-surface standoff missile and joint standoff weapon — onto the B-1 Lance will deliver greater capability to the warfighter once fielded later this year. Maj. Snyder is deputy chief of computer and conventional weapons division of the B-1 System Program Office here.

The JASSM, a powered missile with wings, will allow the B-1B to stand off farther from the enemy, to attack targets from a greater distance, while the JSOW, a glide-type weapon that can go further than a gravity-type bomb, will permit B-1B aircrews to attack targets at a lesser range.

“This test program began in September 2003 at the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB, Calif.,” Maj. Snyder said. “Since then, there have been 19 flights, with a total of 140 test points completed out of 198 planned so far. The latest captive carry test flights took place on Feb. 3 and 19, with the latter involving a weapons flexibility flight with JASSM, JSOW and Joint Directed Attack Munitions.”

The program is awaiting release of software to correct deficiencies discovered during flight test, Maj. Snyder explained. “Boeing at Oklahoma City, Okla., is performing functional tests on the software revision with a planned release date of March 15.”

A series of flight tests are scheduled between now and April 15, the planned end of the flight test program, Maj. Snyder said. “A test readiness review for the first dedicated operational test and evaluation flight took place at the end of February, to assure that all safety precautions had been taken and all planning completed for a successful operational test and evaluation JASSM missile launch.”

The JASSM missile will be an “all-up” round with all the parts and pieces of a real JASSM including the motor and flight control system – but a dummy, inert versus live warhead, he explained. The first dedicated OT &E flight is scheduled to take place in early April.

“Electromagnetic interference compatibility ground tests are planned for early March,” Maj. Snyder said. “This makes sure the B-1, or BONE, as it’s known to those

on the program, aircraft systems don't interfere with the JSOW or JASSM munitions and, likewise, the missile systems don't interfere with aircraft operations."

Another test planned for early March is a timed, load-out ground test, the major said. "Maintenance personnel will load three B-1 bays full of a combination of JASSM, JSOW or JDAM weapons while being timed to make sure the task can be accomplished quickly enough to meet Air Combat Command requirements."

Following the loading, the aircrew will power up all the weapons on the ground to ensure the BONE has enough electrical and computing power to control all the weapons, Major Snyder said. "If everything checks out on the ground, a flight will be scheduled to repeat the test while airborne, with more of the aircraft systems operating."

According to the major, a mid-March range rehearsal mission is scheduled to practice all the steps and procedures for the first OT&E JASSM launch, now scheduled for April 9.

"On March 31, there will be a scheduled JSOW separation release and captive carry mission, followed by a JASSM jettison mission scheduled for April 2," he said.

But the most significant event coming up is the first, full-up launch of an inert JASSM from a B-1B Lancer scheduled for March 26, Maj. Snyder added. "It will take place at the Utah Test Training Range, north of Las Vegas, Nev., and follow standard operational procedures — the missile will fly out, follow a pre-planned flight profile and hit a target."

The flight test program has been "typical" so far during the 11 months Major Snyder has headed up the effort. "You test to find problems that need to be corrected and fix those problems so operational BONE crews get fully checked out capabilities when the system is fielded. That's why we're proceeding with the new software drop, to give the user the best possible weapons system."

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